

# It's your information

## Use and disclosure of vehicle information



There are occasions when the DVLA gives out information about the keeper of a vehicle to the police, local authorities, private companies or individuals. This guidance will help you understand when these disclosures can take place and what to do if you think information about you has been used inappropriately.

### What is vehicle keeper information?

The DVLA holds a register containing details of all vehicles licensed for use on the road. This register also contains the name and address of the registered keeper of each vehicle. The registered keeper of a vehicle is the person or organisation responsible for the licensing and use of that vehicle – this is often, but not always, the legal owner.

The register is used to identify vehicles being used on the road to help prevent and detect crime, prosecute offenders, collect fines, improve road safety and make sure vehicles are properly taxed.

### If I'm the registered keeper, does the DVLA have to ask my permission before passing these details to other people?

No. The details on the vehicle register are not open to the public but can be released on request for a number of reasons. Here are some examples of when information might be disclosed.

- The Data Protection Act 1998 allows personal information to be released on a case-by-case basis when, if the information was withheld, it would be likely to stop or delay preventing or detecting crime or prosecuting offenders.

- To check information about a particular vehicle, such as the year it was made, engine size and colour. A person making this kind of enquiry would only receive information about the vehicle. They would not be given the keeper's name and address.
- The Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002 requires the DVLA to release keeper information to the police or to a local authority to investigate a criminal offence or non-criminal parking offence. These Regulations also require the DVLA to release information to anyone who can prove that they have 'reasonable cause' to have it. The applicant has to pay a fee to receive the information they have requested.

### **What does 'reasonable cause' mean?**

There are a number of circumstances where an individual or organisation might have a justifiable and pressing need for vehicle keeper information. The DVLA will consider their reasons for wanting the information and any application which does not give a good reason will be rejected, as will any application where the DVLA believes the information would be used unfairly or irresponsibly. All those who ask for vehicle keeper information are warned that it is an offence under section 55 of the Data Protection Act 1998 to unlawfully obtain information, for example, by stating they want the information for one reasonable and lawful purpose when actually they want it for another illegitimate or unlawful purpose.

Here are some circumstances where the applicant might be able to demonstrate that they have reasonable cause for obtaining the information.

- To trace the keeper of an abandoned vehicle or a vehicle involved in an minor accident (for example, if a car has been driven into and damaged another vehicle, then been driven away).
- To trace the keeper of a vehicle which has been driven away from a petrol station without paying for fuel or which has been driven without payment of any toll which applies (for example, tunnel or bridge charges).
- To trace keepers who have parked on private land without paying the parking charges.
- To investigate suspected insurance fraud.

Anyone requesting information for these, or any other, reasons should provide evidence to the DVLA which shows why their request is reasonable. Companies who ask for information must always provide details of their business activities. This deters people from pretending to have a reasonable business cause such as recovering money owed for petrol when in fact they want the keeper's name and address for another purpose. Companies requesting information to enforce parking fees must also provide evidence to show that a parking charge scheme actually exists and that drivers are made aware that the scheme is in force.

### **What can I do if my information has been requested or used unlawfully?**

If you are the registered keeper of a vehicle and you have a complaint about the use of your information, first write to: Release of Information, Paying Enquiries Section, DVLA, Swansea SA99 1AJ.

If you are still unhappy after the DVLA has investigated your complaint, you should contact us using the details below.

## More information

If you need any more information about this or any other aspect of data protection, please contact us.

**Phone:**       **08456 30 60 60**  
                  **01625 54 57 45**

**E-mail:**       please use the online enquiry form on our website

**Website:**     [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)